

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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SECRETARY HICKEL HALTS ISSUANCE OF "BLANKET" PERMITS TO KILL GOLDEN EAGLES

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced today that he has ordered a halt to a long-standing practice of issuing "blanket" permits authorizing the killing of golden eagles in one or more counties in a state.

In past years such permits have been issued when requested by a state, based on potential danger to the livestock industry in entire areas.

Intensive recent studies, Secretary Hickel said, indicate that golden eagles' attacks on lambs and goat kids "are not widespread and that they do not threaten either the local economies or the livestock industry generally.

"To undertake unrestricted golden eagle control under these circumstances would inordinately diminish the golden eagle population which the Secretary is charged with the duty of protecting.

"I conclude, therefore, that the responsibility for protecting golden eagles outweighs the need for controlling eagles in order to alleviate local depredations, except in the most critical circumstances."

Under a law enacted in 1940, the Interior Secretary is directed to protect the golden eagle. The law also requires that he investigate individual claims that eagles preying on livestock are causing economic hardship, and issue a permit for individual killing if investigation substantiates the claim.

Secretary Hickel noted that individual farmers and ranchers still may obtain a permit to kill golden eagles. Such permits, he directed, will be issued only after careful investigation, and with the personal approval of the Secretary.

Secretary Hickel also directed the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife "to increase your efforts to find ways and means of repelling or discouraging attacks by golden eagles and to encourage the Wool Growers and other groups to adopt these and other methods that will minimize the potential for eagle depredations."

Found mainly in the Southwest and Mountain States, golden eagles have been declining in numbers for many years. They are somewhat smaller than the bald eagle, America's national bird, and sometimes are confused with the young of the bald eagle.